

George Washington Carver, Inventor



*Education is the key to unlock
the golden door of freedom.*

1 George Washington Carver was born into slavery. When he was just a baby, he and his mother were kidnapped by slave thieves and his mother was never seen again. When slavery ended a year later, his owners decided to raise George as their own child, not a slave.

2 George was sick a lot when he was a child. Instead of working outside, he stayed inside. Mrs. Carver taught George to read, write, sew, and garden. He loved learning about plants and how they could help people. He collected plants and started his own garden.

3 Soon, Mrs. Carver had taught George everything she knew. She hired a tutor to teach him since the local school did not allow Blacks to attend. When he was 12, George left home to attend a school that welcomed Black students. Then in 1879, George enrolled in a school in Fort Scott, Kansas.

4 George worked many different jobs for the next ten years. Then he decided to go to Simpson College in Iowa. He started studying painting but then switched to science. He decided to transfer to Iowa State to study farming. He learned a lot about plants and farming. When he graduated in 1896, George got a teaching job at the Tuskegee Institute.

5 While at the Tuskegee Institute, George worked on science experiments. Farmers were having a hard time growing cotton. The soil was

not healthy. George wanted to fix this. Through his experiments and research he found out that planting peanuts and black-eyed peas improved the soil. He also discovered that peanuts were a healthy food for people. It would also be used for other things as well. He discovered thousands of uses for peanuts and became known as the Peanut Man.

6 George could have made a lot of money selling his discoveries, but he felt that he should share his knowledge as inexpensively for people as possible. In 1906, he created a moving school. It was a school inside a wagon. George would drive from farm to farm teaching farmers what he knew.

7 George continued to do research with plants and farming. When there was a wheat shortage in 1918, George suggested using the sweet potato as a substitute. He found many ways to use the sweet potato, including turning it into sugar and flour. George also taught farmers about crop rotation. Rotating crops means that a farm plants a different crop each year. Since different crops use different nutrients, the soil will stay healthy. This increases food production.

George Washington Carver spent his entire life helping farmers. When he died, his life savings were used to create the George Washington Carver Foundation. This foundation helps African American students study botany and chemistry.

Name: _____

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1. How did George Washington Carver's childhood impact his adult life?

2. What would have happened if George Washington Carver had decided to study painting?

3. What details from the story support the statement below?

George Washington Carver did not care about becoming wealthy.

4. In your opinion, which of George Washington Carver's Achievements was most valuable to the United States? Explain your reasoning.

- Finding many uses for the peanut
- Finding mean uses for the sweet potato
- Teaching farmers about crop rotation.
